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ABSTRACT

An update of an April 1977 survey, this one sought to define more precisely the extent of state education agency activities in the area of educational resource data bases. The survey was mailed to all U.S. states and territories; the response rate was 66 percent. Ninety-seven percent of the respondents, an increase of 29 percent over the 1977 findings, indicated that they are currently building or are intending to build an educational resource base. Thirty percent are either modifying ERIC--the standard data base--or developing systems not at all compatible with it: a slight decline from the earlier survey. The "need areas" most frequently mentioned by respondents were assistance with selection procedures, ERIC compatibility, basic "how to" information, and acquisition techniques. Based on these results, the study recommended: (1) that the National Institute of Education (NIE) recognize these resource base activities and the potential they hold for developing a national educational resource base; (2) that NIE sponsor and/or facilitate the conduct of work sessions and follow-up assistance targeted for state education agency staffs; (3) that NIE sponsor a more in-depth, probing investigation of the information informally gathered through this and the previous survey. Both survey forms and lists of respondents are appended. (JD)

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A SURVEY TO DETERMINE THE EXTENT OF STATE EDUCATION AGENCY EFFORTS TO DEVELOP DATA BASES OF SEA-FUNDED PROJECTS AND/OR EXEMPLARY PROJECTS AND PRACTICES

by Gregory M. Benson, Jr.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

November, 1978

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Gregory M. Benson

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

NOTE: This is an update of a survey undertaken in April, 1977 attached as Appendix A.

IR006902

Introduction

This survey was undertaken to determine the extent of State Education Agency (SEA) efforts currently underway to develop resource bases containing SEA funded projects, SEA validated projects, instructional materials or locally developed practices or materials. An initial survey was undertaken in April, 1977 and this is a follow-up of that initial effort.

The extent of SEA efforts in this area clearly indicates the need for a viable knowledge base to support other dissemination/diffusion efforts.

One major implication drawn from this and the 1977 survey is the need for more coordination of these educational resource base activities. If we are to develop a resource base of National magnitude that draws upon the various SEA efforts, strong initiatives must be undertaken at once. Though the National Education Practice File may provide a design model, the funding of that project does not include a coordination function to deal with the reality demonstrated by this and the 1977 survey.

Since a knowledge base is the core of any change effort, coordination of the educational practice knowledge base would go a long way toward coordination of the other dissemination functions such as "linker" or "intermediary" activities.

Focus on the knowledge base has other beneficial outcomes as well. For instance, when building a knowledge base that goes beyond "validated" projects, one quickly discovers that our quality indicators are inconsistent and in many cases nonexistent. This does not become fully apparent until one collects a variety of practices and attempts to select what should be included in a resource base or "practice file" based on quality outcomes. A focus on resource base development makes this need blatantly apparent and already one can observe more attention being paid to solving this "quality" problem (didn't that situation lead to a "validation" process?).

In short, as we develop resource bases, we become more aware of what is. This is an educational process that improves our ability to demand a higher quality and we become more effective educational information consumers. To become truly more effective, we must demand and work cooperatively to institute "labeling laws" for educational practices much the same as we have done for supermarket products.

A move toward effective educational practice "labeling laws" would go a long way toward eliminating many of the current "linker" activities required now because we do not know or report sufficient content, context and/or contextual quality indicators regarding educational practice. We should move toward resolution of these issues together and the one element common to all educational change efforts is the knowledge base. Individually, we are realizing this fact and attempting to do

something about it. This is clearly evidenced by the two surveys. However, if we are to develop a national capability reflective of our individual needs, there must be a mechanism through which we can orchestrate our efforts. The recommendations drawn from this and the previous survey begin to provide a direction for this coordination function and how it might be achieved.

Problem

NIE has funded BRS, Inc. to undertake the design and development of a National Educational Practice File. At this stage of that design effort, the intended content of a Practice File (national and state validated practices as well as locally developed practices) seems to be similar to the content of many files being developed by SEA's. BRS staff, having come in contact with some of these SEA efforts, had no idea how extensive they really were other than to refer to the survey undertaken by this author in 1977.

This Survey

This survey is an effort to define more precisely the extent of SEA activities in this area and to update the survey undertaken in 1977 in order to identify developmental trends.

Survey Findings/Implications

NOTE: Survey mailed to all U.S. States and Territories. Response was received from 37 of the 56 or 66%

- 97% of the respondents indicated that they are (83%) or are intending to build (14%) an educational resource base. This represents an increase of 29% over the survey results obtained in 1977. Clearly, this is more than a trend, it is representative of all but universal fact across the population of agencies at the SEA level.

- Content of the educational resource base:

-Projects funded by the SEA	19%
-State validated projects	19%
-Projects/practices deemed to be exemplary	22%
-Instructional materials	15%
-Locally developed practices or materials	15%
-Other	10%

NOTE: "Other" includes 5% (one half of the responses in that category) indicating "human resources".

The focus of content is on projects/practices somehow associated with a "quality" measure be it a defined process (validation) or a more subjective selection ("exemplary"). The focus on projects funded by the SEA may indicate that the systems being developed are intended to serve a management objective. This will require follow-up to verify.

Of particular interest is the emerging development of "human resources" as a portion of the total educational information base.

- Of those respondents currently developing or contemplating development of a resource base, 30% are either modifying ERIC or developing systems not at all compatible with ERIC. Further exploration of the nature of the compatibility is needed. Reporting formats may be similar but not identical which does allow for compatibility. Future surveys will be more specific on this point. It is interesting to note, however,

that ERIC compatibility is decreasing (77% in 1977, 70% in 1978).

- 25% of those developing a resource base either are, or intend to be computerized within one year.

- Only 27% of those developing or operating resource bases have a processing manual or other description that outlines the operation. Unless this question was misunderstood or unclear, the results would seem to indicate that there are but a few efforts sufficiently formalized to document the processing of information into and out of the resource base. This would seem to reflect either a lack of committment, or the desire to be informal. Reasons for the informality of the resource bases being developed should also be investigated.

- Of those computerizing their resource base, 12% are doing sb with commercial vendors, 24% are using SEA facilities, 24% are using University facilities and the remainder (40%) are undecided. The variety of computer facilities being utilized undoubtedly means that a variety of divergent software is also being used.

- 44% of the respondents indicated that presentations at the Dissemination Forum or other national/regional conferences either did not (36%), or only partially (8%) related to their specific needs regarding resource base development. The most frequently mentioned "need areas" were:

  Assistance with---

  -Selection procedures

  -ERIC Compatibility

  -Basic "how to" information

  -Acquisition Techniques

  This information would indicate the need for sessions specifically tailored for those desiring to build (or currently building) resource bases.

Conclusions:

The conclusions of the 1977 survey were reinforced by this survey. However, the lack of documented procedures and the need for specific "help" sessions relating to resource base development seem to indicate that though the efforts are widespread, they are lacking a formal developmental/design structure and there is no apparent, ready source of assistance to provide a design framework.

If one were to identify the major trends/conclusions indicated by this and the previous survey, among them would be:

- Resource base development at the SEA level has grown to a major, nearly a total, proportion.
- The resource bases being developed are becoming more uniquely focused on SEA needs.
- There is little formal design effort or developmental/operational documentation available which is indicative of the lack of general coordination or availability of general "design guidelines" and "how to" assistance.

Recommendations:

1. That NIE recognize the SEA resource base development activities and the potential they hold for developing a National educational resource base.

2. That NIE sponsor and/or facilitate the conduct of work sessions and follow-up technical assistance targeted for SEA staff desiring to formaily develop resource bases.

3. That NIE sponsor a more indepth, probing investigation of the information informally gathered through this and the previous survey.

Comment:

It should be noted that after the 1977 survey, two of the recommendations in that document were addressed by NIE. First, ERIC staff have offered assistance to SEA's desiring to be ERIC compatible. Secondly, there were sessions devoted to resource base development and ERIC compatibility at the 1978 Dissemination Forum. These efforts, however, are not sufficient as is indicated by this survey.

Further, unless the objectives of the SEA resource base are the same as those of ERIC, a focus on ERIC compatibility is questionable. ERIC was designed as an archival system in light of the technology in existence at the time. Since then, there has been a technological revolution in the data entry and processing area. Also, information system designs are stressing dynamic requirements and becoming focused on decision making rather than on passive resource availability. These factors must be addressed by work sessions and no pre-session assumptions made regarding the applicability of any existing system. To make such assumptions could well be detrimental to SEA's whose agency needs go beyond system specifications that reflect the design and technology of more than a decade ago.

APPENDIX A

A SURVEY TO DETERMINE THE EXTENT OF STATE EDUCATION AGENCY (SEA) EFFORTS TO DEVELOP DATA BASES OF SEA-FUNDED PROJECTS AND/OR EXEMPLARY PROJECTS AND PRACTICES

by
Gregory Benson

April, 1977

Educational Programs and Studies Information Service
Division of Research
New York State Education Department
Albany, New York 12234

INTRODUCTION

The New York State Education Department received a National Institute of Education (NIE) Dissemination Capacity Building Grant in 1975. The major intent of this grant effort is to develop an ERIC-compatible educational resource containing descriptions of programs operating in New York State and of locally developed (in New York State) instructional materials.

The rationale for this effort is simply that the degree to which educational information is obtained and utilized effectively is directly related to the information relevancy (geographic and content) and ease of access to the information.

As the EPSIS unit of the New York State Education Department initiated efforts to develop a data base, it found a great deal of interest expressed by other SEA's. This interest was and is being expressed as requests for materials (formats, etc.), progress reports and consultative assistance. In addition, several SEA representatives have visited the EPSIS unit to discuss implementation of a similar educational resource base.

Lastly, interest has been expressed by all five Regional Exchanges since they are developing regional resource bases.

PROBLEM

NIE has indicated to the EPSIS unit that no other SEA's would receive significant funds under the Capacity Building Program to develop a resource base. This is apparently so due to the nature of the program itself and the fact that EPSIS was already funded to do this and other SEA's were to "wait and see" what the outcome of the New York project is.

Unfortunately this stance results in:

1. The incorrect assumption (as shown by this survey) that other SEA's can and will await the final outcome of the New York project before initiating resource development.

2. No organized effort by NIE to coordinate the resource development efforts or make arrangements for technical assistance in that regard.

3. A heavy burden on EPSIS staff caused by a significant number of detailed inquiries regarding the resource development. This problem has been brought to the attention of NIE and acknowledged as not solvable in the near future.

The EPSIS staff, having become aware of numerous efforts by SEA's to develop manual and/or computerized resource bases is concerned that these multitude of efforts ultimately be compatible which would result in a significant contribution to the existance of a comprehensive, national resource base.

THIS SURVEY

In an effort to determine just how many SEA's are developing resource bases and to get an indication as to how advanced they are, EPSIS staff undertook this brief survey of all SEA Dissemination Representatives and Capacity Building Project Directors (when they differed from the Dissemination Representative).

The cover letter and survey sheet are attached as Appendix A and the list of SEA's responding is attached as Appendix B.

This is certainly not a detailed nor sophisticated survey. However, as the survey results indicate, there is a significant amount of resource development activity in SEA's and attention to the recommendations generated by this survey is warranted.

THE SURVEY FINDINGS

- Total Responses - 39 responses representing 37 SEA's (74% of the States)
  Note: Michigan returned 3 survey forms

- 67% of the respondents indicated that they are (44%) or are contemplating (23%) building a program data base of projects funded by the SEA and/or exemplary projects or practices.

- Of those that are or are contemplating data base development, 77% indicated it is or will be ERIC compatible.

- Of those developing data bases, 21% indicated that they are computerized and an additional 12% indicated they will be computerized. At present, 67% are manual systems.

- Of those who are computerized or will be, 63% are developing loading programs.

- Of those who are or intend to have computer retrieval, only 10% are using a commercial vendor. The remainder are utilizing inhouse computer facilities or facilities of nearby educational agencies.

- Of those developing a data base, 65% indicated they have or will have a reporting format.

- Of those developing a data base, 56% indicated they have or will have a processing manual.

- 85% of all respondents expressed interest in a meeting whereby ultimate system compatibility could be insured. A third (33%) of those expressing interest in such a meeting indicated they could attend at their own expense.

CONCLUSIONS

1. SEA's around the county are finding it necessary to develop systematic resource bases containing descriptions of funded projects or exemplary projects or practices. This will come as no surprise to many since the availability of such a resource base is a logical extension of the delivery of ERIC.

   This need may simply be such an extension or it may be the pressure of economics, accountability and abundent educator inquiries which require easy access to successful programs. It might also reflect the management need to know what has been funded regardless of fund source.

Whatever the motivation, there is an undeniable effort to develop these resources in SEA's.

2. The standard or model after which the majority of these data base efforts are patterned is the ERIC system.

   This too will come as no surprise to many since ERIC is a highly viable model and one familiar to thousands of educators.

3. A significant number of SEA's are developing these resource bases with the intent of making them computer retrievable. Of those that are, the vast majority (90%) intend to utilize non-commercial vendors.

   Since these efforts are not being coordinated and most of the resultant data bases are to be run independently, there is an extremely high probability that the resultant data bases will not be compatible. This lack of compatibility will be reflected in reporting formats, tape formats, indexing procedures, loading programs and retrieval capability.

4. The vast majority of SEA representatives are interested in insuring the ultimate compatibility of these resource development efforts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That NIE acknowledge the need for and fund additional SEA efforts to develop program resource bases.

2. That the current and future SEA efforts be coordinated by NIE staff (Dissemination Resource Group - specifically Capacity Building Grant staff and ERIC staff).

3. That an immediate effort be made by NIE staff to collect reporting formats and more detailed information regarding the program resource base developmental efforts underway in SEA's.

4. That a session at the June, 1977 Dissemination Forum be devoted to discussing this issue and outlining steps to insure ultimate compatibility of efforts.

COMMENT

Over ten years ago the Federal level recognized the need for a national educational resource base. That recognition led to the development of ERIC. The growth and widespread use of ERIC is evidence of the concern and need that educators have for educational information.

Recently, SEA's have recognized the need to organize and make available programmatic information specific to their State. There is no reason to doubt that these efforts will grow or be used at a rate slower than ERIC. In fact, the evidence would indicate that the SEA resource bases will grow and be utilized at a rate that exceeds that of ERIC.

If these SEA efforts are coordinated and steps taken to insure compatibility with ERIC, they would represent a significant supplement to ERIC and would be a positive step toward a national data base of exemplary projects in the United States.

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12234

APPENDIX A

ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER FOR RESEARCH, PLANNING AND EVALUATION

DIVISIONS OF RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND STUDIES INFORMATION SERVICE
518: 474-3759
CURRICULUM LAB—ERIC SERVICE

February 1977

Dear State Dissemination Representative/Capacity Building Project Director:

As you may know, the Educational Programs and Studies Information Service (EPSIS) unit of the New York State Education Department has been awarded a grant by the National Institute of Education to set up two data bases. The Educational Programs data base will provide educators with a single access point for information that will facilitate the planning of their own programs. The teacher Developed Materials (TDM) data base will provide teachers with a source of information about materials available for use in direct classroom instruction.

These data bases will both be computer retrievable and ERIC compatible. This is a coordinated effort to collect and organize information so that the development of similar materials throughout the State will be reduced to a minimum. This attempt to prevent expensive duplication will also promote cooperation between local districts as well as among program offices at the SEA level.

We are writing to you todetermine the extent of other states efforts in this area so as to avoid duplication and future incompatibility among SEA's. We hope you will take a few minutes to answer the questions on the attached sheet. A pre-paid, self-addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience. Thank you for your help in promoting more comprehensive information services to all educators.

Sincerely,

Gregory Benson, Jr.
Coordinator, Educational Programs
and Studies Information Service

GB/mg
Enclosures

State Education Agency Survey: Resource Development

Contact Person _____

Address _____

1. Are you now building a Program Data Base of Programs funded by the State Education Agency and/or of exemplary projects or practices ☐ YES ☐ NO.

2. If No, are you contemplating such a project? ☐ YES NO ☐
   If Yes, when will you begin? _____

   If you have answered yes to either of the above questions, please go further and tell us:

3. Is your Program Information File ERIC compatible? ☐ YES NO ☐

4. The file is ☐ MANUAL Computerized ☐

5. If computerized, are you developing loading programs? ☐ YES NO ☐

6. Where do you intend to house the file for computer retrieval?

   ☐ COMMERICAL (which vendor?) _____
   ☐ OTHER (where?) _____

7. Do you have a reporting format? (If YES, please send)

   ☐ YES ☐ BEING DEVELOPED ☐ NO

8. Do you have a Processing Manual to explain procedures for reporting? (If YES, please send).

   ☐ YES ☐ BEING DEVELOPED ☐ NO

9. Would you be interested in a meeting whereby we could specifically discuss and have working sessions to insure the ultimate compatibility of our efforts?

   ☐ YES ☐ NO

10. If YES, could you attend a centrally located meeting at your own expense (no Federal support beyond what you have)?

    ☐ YES ☐ NO

11. COMMENTS:

SEA's Responding to Resource Development Survey

Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Florida
Georgia
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Kansas
Kentucky
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Puerto Rico
Rhode Island
South Carolina
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virgin Islands
Virginia
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

NOTE: a survey form was also completed for N.Y.S.

APPENDIX B

BRS *Bibliographic Retrieval Services, Inc.*

Corporation Park, Bldg. 702
Scotia, New York 12302
(518) 374-5011

September 18, 1978

TO: SEA Dissemination Representatives/Capacity Building Project Directors

FROM: Greg Benson

SUBJECT: SEA RESOURCE BASE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

As you may recall, in April, 1977, I undertook a "Survey to Determine the Extent of State Education Agency Efforts to Develop Databases of SEA-Funded Projects and/or Exemplary Projects and Practices" (ED 139 426) which was a simple and quick assessment of the SEA efforts in this area. Since that time no similar information has been collected to update the original survey. Since (1) I have had a number of inquiries regarding more up-to-date information made by people seeking assistance, (2) many more SEA's are now involved in file development, and (3) the nature and extent of SEA file building efforts may have direct implications for the ultimate development of the Education Practice File, I have decided to conduct the survey again to update the original information.

As with the initial survey, I have kept it brief so as to be easily completed in just a minute or two. Also, as was the case before, I shall tabulate the survey results and forward them to you.

Nearly every SEA responded to the original survey and I am hopeful that the same will hold true for this update.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to respond. A prepaid, return evelope is included for your convenience.

GB:CMA
Enclosures

STATE EDUCATION AGENCY SURVEY: RESOURCE BASE DEVELOPMENT

Name of Respondent: _____

Responding Agency: _____

Agency Address: _____

_____

1. Are you building an educational resource base?

- ☐ YES
- ☐ NO

If yes, check below what is included in the resource base.

- ☐ Projects funded by the SEA
- ☐ State validated projects
- ☐ Projects/practices deemed to be promising or exemplary
- ☐ Instructional materials
- ☐ Locally developed practices or materials (locally funded)
- ☐ Other (Specify) _____

_____

If no, are you contemplating such an effort?

- ☐ YES
- ☐ NO

2. Are you attempting to make your resource base compatible with ERIC?

- ☐ YES
- ☐ NO
- MODIFIED ERIC (Explain) _____

_____

3. Is access to the resource base,

- ☐ MANUAL, or
- ☐ COMPUTERIZED?

4. If computerized, do you have an abstract format?

- ☐ YES
- ☐ NO

If yes, please attach.

5. Do you have a processing "manual" or description that outlines the operation of your resource base?

- ☐ YES
- ☐ NO

6. If you are computerizing your resource base, or intend to, where do you (intend to) house the file for retrieval purposes?

- ☐ Commercial Vendor (Which one?) _____
- ☐ Other (Where?) _____

7. Do presentations at the Dissemination Forum or other national/regional conferences provide you with sufficient information/ideas for developing your resource base?

- ☐ YES
- ☐ NO

If no, please suggest what agenda items you would like included if a meeting/workshop were held specifically related to resource base/file development:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

8. Comments/Questions

(If you did not receive a copy of the "Progress Report of the Education Practice File Development Project" and would like one, please indicate here.)

APPENDIX C

SEA's Responding

Idaho
New York
Florida
Alabama
Ohio
Illinois
Arizona
Michigan
New Hampshire
Alaska
Virginia
Massachusetts
Mississippi
Georgia
Utah
Texas
Tennesee
Indiana
W. Virginia
Vermont
Kansas
Pennsylvania
New Jersey
Wisconsin
Rhode Island
St. Thomas
Washington
Nebraska
South Dakota
North Dakota
Kentucky
Mariana Islands
Oklahoma
Puerto Rico
Oregon
Missouri
New Mexico